of crop or other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to areas not exceeding 10 hectares in the hills and 25 hectares in the plains.

(ii) To consider banning of fellings in the hills above 1,000 metres, at least for some years.

(iii) To identify critical areas in the hills and mountains which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigorous afforestation.

(iv) To set apart 4% of the geographical area as protection area like wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, biosphere reserves etc.

Grant of H.R.A. to Central Government Employees

276. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government employees sharing accommodation with other Government employees are granted House Rent Allowance;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the spouses and wards of the Central Government employees who share accommodation allotted to their husbands and parents are not granted any House Rent Allowance;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor and the estimated amount to be incurred annually, if the same is granted to the above category of Government employees;

(d) whether Government propose to grant House Rent Allowance to all the Government employees irrespective of their relationship with the allottees of Government accommodation; and

(e) if so, when orders to this effect are likely to be issued?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI B.K. GADHVI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) House Rent Allowance is given for compensating the high rents that the employees have to pay for hiring private accommodation. On the other hand, Government accommodation allotted to the Central Government employees is on subsidised rents with large space. House Rent Allowance is admissible only when the employees incur some expenditure on rent or contribute towards rent. In the case of Government accommodation being shared by husband/wife and wards/parents, as one of them is a main allottee, the question of contributing or payment or rent by the other sharer does not arise, in view of their relationship involved. Accordingly, there is no justification to allow House Rent Allowance to sharer of Government accommodation allotted to husband/wife and wards/parents. The total expenditure to be incurred annually by Government, if House Rent Allowance is allowed to above mentioned Government servants, cannot be worked out due to non-availability of data regarding number of Government servants sharing Government accommodation with their parents/spouses/wards and not drawing House Rent Allowance.

(d) No Sir.

(e) Does not arise

Destruction of vegetation, shrubs and trees near government colony in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi

277. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the vegetation, shrubs and trees near

Government Colony in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi being systematically destroyed by the hired men of M/s Modern Bazar and Hotel Vasant Continental for their commercial benefit; and

(b) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) Information is being collected from Delhi Administration and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Dilution of equity by Hindustan Lever Limited

278. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Hindustan Lever Limited has not diluted its equity below 51% as per the provisions of FERA even though 74% of its production and sales is in low technology area of soaps and detergents;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the operation of such a multinational company in low technology area is against Government's policy thereby affecting the growth of indigenous and small scale industries; and

(c) if so, what action Government propose to take in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) Hindustan Lever Limited was permitted under Section 29(2)(a) of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973 to continue to carry on its business in India with 51% foreign equity subject, *inter-alia*, to the conditions that (i) the company's annual turnover from Appendix I activity, products/process involving sophisticated technology and own exports would not be less than 60% of the company's total turnover; and (ii) not less than 10% of the company's own production during each year would be exported.

The company has been fulfilling these stipulations.

(c) Does not arise.

Impounding of aircraft by the Customs Department

279. SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Customs Department, Bombay have impounded two newly purchased aircraft by the Air India on account of non-payment of duties by the Air India;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that Air India had not applied for the total duty exemption to the Customs Department before bringing the new aircraft; and

(d) if so, what is the present position of the case with regard to the release of these aircrafts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) M/s. Air India applied for total exemption from Customs duty leviable on two B-747-300 (Combi) aircraft to be imported into India before bringing them into the country.

(d) The aircraft have already been released.

Adoption of legal device by Smugglers to avoid detention Under COFEPOSA

280. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that suspected